

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 IO-13 ACDA-12 AID-05 DOE-15 SOE-02
OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-08 /143 W
-----103337 151213Z /47

R 150843Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2048
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSULDHAHRAN
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USLO RIYADH
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 3626

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, SA, ET, SO
SUBJECT: SOMALIA AND ETHIOPIA

1. IN CONVERSATION WITH POL COUN ON MAY 14, MFA DIRECTOR FOR ASIAN AND AFRICAN AFFAIRS AHMAD SIRAJ SAID THAT HE HAD NO INFORMATION ON SIAD BARRE'S RECENT VISIT BECAUSE MFA OFFICIALS WHO ATTENDED MEETINGS HAD NOT RETURNED TO JIDDA FROM RIYADH. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT SAG WAS DISTURBED BY MENGISTU'S THREAT OF AN ETHIOPIAN ATTACK ON SOMALIA. POL COUN SAID THAT WE WERE ALSO CONCERNED BY MENGISTU STATEMENT AND THAT WE HOPED SIAD BARRE WOULD NOT GIVE ETHIOPIA EXCUSE FOR SUCH AN ATTACK BY CONTINUED OR RENEWED ASSIS-
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TANCE TO LIBERATION FRONT IN OGADEN. SIRAJ SAID IT WAS UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT BARRE TO STOP IMMEDIATELY ALL ASSIS-
TANCE TO LIBERATION FRONT. BEST BARRE CAN DO IS TO TAPER OFF HIS ASSISTANCE. OGADEN PROBLEM HAS EXISTED FOR YEARS, EVEN DURING PERIOD OF HAILE SELASSIE. IF BARRE SUDDENLY STOPS SOMALI ASSISTANCE TO LIBERATION FRONT, HE WILL BE OVERTHROWN BY SOMALIS.

2. POL COUN EMPHASIZED THAT WE WERE CONCERNED ABOUT SOMALI ASSISTANCE TO FRONT FOR TWO REASONS. FIRST, IT WOULD GIVE ETHIOPIA EXCUSE TO ATTACK. SECOND, IT WOULD JEOPARDIZE OUR OWN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO SOMALIA. POL COUN THEN MADE POINTS 4,5 AND 6 CONTAINED IN PARA ONE OF STATE 116104.

3. SIRAJ WELCOMED NEWS THAT U.S. WAS ABOUT TO BEGIN STEPS LEADING TO BILATERAL MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO SOMALIA, BUT HE SAID THAT \$15 MILLION WAS VERY SMALL PACKAGE INDEED. SAUDI ARABIA HAS FURNISHED AID AMOUNTING TO MANY, MANY TIMES THAT AMOUNT. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT IT WAS A BEGINNING AND A MOVE IN RIGHT DIRECTION. WE MUST RECOGNIZE PROBLEM OF SOVIET PRESSURE IN HORN OF AFRICA AND MUST FIND WAY TO DEAL WITH IT, INDEED COUNTER IT. SAUDI ARABIA AND U.S. MUST HELP THOSE WHO OPPOSE SOVIETS, EVEN THOUGH THEY HAVE FAULTS.

4. COMMENT: CURRENT SAUDI FEELING ON HORN OF AFRICA IS THAT USG HAS YET TO UNDERSTAND WHERE ITS INTERESTS LIE. AS SAG SEES IT, USSR KNOWS THAT BY MID OR LATE 1980'S IT WILL BE NET IMPORTING COUNTRY AS FAR AS PETROLEUM IS CONCERNED. SOVIETS ARE THEREFORE ALREADY PREPARING FOR THAT EVENTUALITY AND ARE LOOKING FOR ALTERNATIVE SOURCE. THAT SOURCE IS PERSIAN GULF. HENCE, USSR IS NOW ESTABLISHED IN HORN AND IS BEGINNING TO IMPLEMENT ITS PLAN TO ENCIRCLE SAUDI ARABIA AND PERSIAN GULF. AFTER ETHIOPIA AND SOMALIA, USSR WILL CONSOLIDATE ITS POSITION IN SOUTH YEMEN AND BEGIN PRESSURE ON NORTH YEMEN. ACCORDING TO SAUDI DOMINO THEORY, OMAN WILL FALL NEXT AND SOVIETS WILL BE STANDING AT GATES OF EASTERN PROVINCE AND SAUDI OIL FIELDS. SAG DOES NOT UNDERSTAND WHY U.S. CANNOT GRASP FULL IMPLICATIONS OF PRESENT DANGER AND TAKE STEPS TO COUNTER SOVIET THREAT. SIRAJ TOLD CFR FELLOW WHO VISITED JIDDA RECENTLY THAT SAUDI ARABIA WILL NOT CHANGE ITS POLICY OF OPPOSING SOVIETS AND WILL NOT TURN AWAY FROM US. SAUDIS HAVE PATIENCE OF A CAMEL AND WILL STILL BE HERE WHEN USG SEES SITUATION IN TRUE LIGHT AND WANTS TO COOPERATE. IN FACT, HE SAID SAG HAS NO OTHER PLACE TO GO. HE GAVE IMPRESSION THAT SAG WAS LESS LIKE A CAMEL THAN A LONG-SUFFERING DECEIVED WIFE WAITING FOR PHILANDERING HUSBAND TO SEE ERROR OF HIS WAYS AND RETURN TO THE HEARTH.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DEBRIEFINGS, DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978JIDDA03626
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780205-0096
Format: TEL
From: JIDDA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780559/aaaabyad.tel
Line Count: 113
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 5a8b1c9f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2691576
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOMALIA AND ETHIOPIA
TAGS: PEPR, OVIP, SA, ET, SO, US, UR, (MOHAMED SIAD BARRE), (SIRAJ, AHMAD)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5a8b1c9f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014